

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 09821 221731Z
ACTION SS-25

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O 221723Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8999

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 09821

EXDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR FOR THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: US, FR, SENV, XG, XT
SUBJECT: AMOCO CADIZ OIL SPILL: SUGGESTED
PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REF: (A) PARIS 9493; (B) PARIS 977L

1. AMOCO CADIZ OIL SPILL IS RAPIDLY DEVELOPING INTO A CATASTROPHE FOR NORTHERN BRITTANY AND A MAJOR NEW POLITICAL PROBLEM FOR THE GOF. CONTINUING STORMS ARE PREVENTING COMMENCEMENT OF COUNTER-OPERATIONS. HEAVY POLLUTION IS SO FAR AFFECTING OVER A SIXTY MILE STRETCH OF COAST AND SPREADING. AT LEAST 120,000 TONS OF OIL HAVE ALREADY SPILLED. CONTINUING BAD WEATHER MAY BE CAUSING SPILL OF REST OF CARGO OF JUST OVER 100,000 TONS OF CRUDE.

2. THE PRECISE LEVEL OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT DAMAGE IS AS YET INCALCULABLE. BUT GOF AND THE FRENCH PUBLIC REALIZE THAT IT WILL BE HUGE IN ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL TERMS. AS RESULT, FRENCH PUBLIC AND MEDIA REACTION IS NOW TURNING FROM INITIAL REGRET OVER ACCIDENT ITSELF TO A GROWING AND KEEN
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PAGE 02 PARIS 09821 221731Z

ANGER THAT SUCH ACCIDENTS SEEM TO OCCUR SO REGULARLY. CURRENT THRUST OF FRENCH REACTION IS THEREFORE TO CALL FOR QUICK AND EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL ACTION TO PREVENT SUCH DISASTERS IN THE FUTURE. IN RESPONSE GISCARD HAS ALREADY CALLED FOR MORE EFFECTIVE PROTECTION OF FRENCH COASTS AND HAS INDICATED HIS INTENTION TO MAKE MORE COMPREHENSIVE

PROPOSALS BEFORE JULY 1. WHILE US, AS SUCH, IS NOT A PRIMARY TARGET, SOME OF THE BLAME COULD WELL RUB OFF ON US; PARTLY BECAUSE AMOCO CADIZ IS OWNED BY STANDARD OIL OF INDIANA, EVEN THOUGH CURRENTLY UNDER LONG-TERM CHARTER BY SHELL.

3. GIVEN RAPIDLY GROWING POLITICAL IMPORTANCE THIS DISASTER IN FRANCE, I THINK IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE IF THE PRESIDENT WERE TO SEND SOONEST A PUBLISHABLE MESSAGE TO GISCARD ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

4. BEGIN TEXT: DEAR VALERY: I WAS SHOCKED TO LEARN THAT ANOTHER OIL-SPILL DISASTER IS CAUSING HUGE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAVOC IN THE BEAUTIFUL REGION OF BRITTANY. I HOPE THAT THE TECHNICIANS WE HAVE SENT ARE CONTRIBUTING TO YOUR MAJOR EFFORTS TO CONTAIN THIS SITUATION. PLEASE LET ME KNOW PERSONALLY IF THERE IS ANYTHING MORE WE CAN DO TO HELP. AS FOR THE FUTURE, THIS INCIDENT AGAIN ILLUSTRATES THE IMPORTANCE ALL OF US SHOULD ATTACH TO INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE MORE EFFECTIVE REGULATION OF THESE TYPES OF SHIPS. END TEXT.
HARTMAN

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Message Attributes

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